Refocusing the Leader Development Lens

by Captain Jason C. Slider and Captain William H. Goin

"We are working on producing leaders for change, not just leaders who are doctrinally capable and competent leaders for warfighting, but leaders also for all kinds of missions that we are asked to be able to do today across the full spectrum."

The Honorable Louis Caldera
Former Secretary of the Army

Leader development and tactical and digital training can no longer remain exclusive and separate concepts or initiatives. Embedded in all aspects of the combat arms profession is decisive action — decisionmaking. Leadership does not come from a book, but from experience, circumstance, and opportunity. Given the greater focus on constructive and virtual simulations in the unit resulting from increased constraints on live tactical training at home station, leader development schools must position themselves as premier training centers. Just as combat training centers (CTC) are critical to the unit, TRADOC schoolhouses must emerge as premier "battle schools" for leader development.

The Impetus for Change

Resulting from emerging concepts and lessons learned during the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP), numerous Army Warfighting Experiments (AWE), and the Digital Capstone Exercises (DCX) I and II, TRADOC is focusing more emphasis on transforming leader development into battle schools equipped with embedded digital command and control (C2) systems. Most military theorists agree that the principles of warfare in the 21st century require continued scrutiny for relevance and applicability. However, adaptive, self-confident leaders remain basic elements of tactical victory, now and in the future. Additionally, the revolutionary changes in information management and distribution realized through the application of automated command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) systems require leaders to make decisions more rapidly than ever before. To ensure that the Army continues to develop capable leaders throughout Army Transformation, the Army Officer Education System (OES) and TRADOC is transforming its methods and means of training 21st-century leaders.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and Operation Desert Storm, the Army, specifically the armor and mechanized forces, realize the integral imperative of change to ensure a relative and ready force. Today, the terrorist attacks on our financial, political, and military infrastructure on 11 September 2001 and Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle make this integral imperative all the more immediate. Realizing the operational shortfalls during Operation Desert Storm and anticipating the future personality of conflict, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff unveiled and directed Army Transformation. Clearly, Army Transformation is timely and focused on developing a force structure to better address and dispense with threats to our national security and allies. However, Army Transformation is not solely focused on technologically advanced equipment, organizations, and sustainment initiatives. OES Transformation is Army Transformation — the underpinning is training!

Current training and education methods were implemented and have remained relatively unchanged. Army Transformation becomes the agent by which current learning and education models and methods are migrated to support emerging Interim and Objective Force operational and organizational designs. The purpose of transforming the OES is to grow adaptive and versatile leaders capable of leading the Army successfully to the Objective Force and beyond.

As the Army strives to modernize its force, training models, and, specifically, its training methodology, we must achieve a holistic approach to leader development. In doing so, tasks, conditions, and standards of training and leader development must address several new challenges facing the armor force. These include asymmetric and other operational environments that cut decisionmaking time in half and increase C2 and situational awareness through the application of commercial and militarized C4I systems.

Refocusing the Lens

The principles of war and operations in the 21st century will continue to guide our training focus, but their effect on leader development is (at least) threefold. First, leaders will need a more inclusive, broader base of experience. Second, leaders at the company level will be expected to accept greater responsibility and make decisions with greater impact than previously necessary. Third, full-spectrum operations will require leaders to shift seamlessly between offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations in friendly, hostile, or neutral environments.[1] While these topics do not entail everything a leader or commander needs, they provide a good start for transforming the Army's institutional training base.

The U.S. Army and the armor force continue to remain trained and ready to conduct and participate in a major theater of war (MTW). Army Transformation addresses operational shortfalls in our responsiveness to other complex and diverse worldwide environments, such as small-scale contingencies (SSC), stability and support operations (SASO), and humanitarian sup-

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port operations.[2] Across this full spectrum of operations, it is leadership, not technology, that is critical to accomplishing the mission and protecting our greatest national investment — the American soldier.

Training Decisionmakers for the 21st Century

To maintain operational momentum in Force XXI units and beyond, leaders will have to be willing and able to modify operation orders and make decisions efficiently and fluidly.[3] Information that used to be available only to brigade or regimental commanders is now easily accessible to company and troop commanders properly networked in their M1A1D/M1A2 SEP tanks, M2A3/M3A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, M106 Paladins, TOCs, and C2 vehicles. As is the case throughout history, victory will rely on the independent thought and initiative of lower-echelon leaders. Therefore, leader training must focus on development of these traits through digitally enhanced battle simulations and scenarios that are challenging, realistic, mission-focused, and purposely ambiguous and difficult.

Colonel John M. House does an excellent job of describing battlefield scenarios that blur the lines between offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations in his article, "The Enemy After Next."[4] While the threat of a MTW involving large armored formations and clearly defined objectives remains a primary mission and focus of Army doctrine, battlefields like Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and now Afghanistan present convoluted situations to leaders and commanders daily. To address this issue, we must get company-grade leaders out of the classroom and infuse MOUT training and complex environments into our curriculum. We must put lieutenants and captains in realistic training scenarios in unfamiliar territory where the more traditional Soviet threat based model is but one facet of this new operational environment. Incorporating civilians on the battlefield (COB), restrictive rules of engagement (ROE), ethical dilemmas and multiple-faction engagements enhance the realism and confusion of the battlefield and better prepares our leaders to deploy to locations and successfully conduct operations globally.

As discussed above, emerging new world threats and C4I system capabilities require leaders to assess tactical situations, manage information, and make decisions rapidly in an execution-centric, not planning-intensive environment. Battlefield simulations have shown that decisionmaking timelines in MTWs, SSCs, and operations other than war (OOTW) are shortened by half or more.[5] Traditional analytical decisionmaking models and processes, such as the military decisionmaking process (MDMP) — classroom training in small group situations where brigade and battalion staff roles are appointed to each student — do not equip or prepare company-grade leaders with the appropriate tools and skills to visualize the battlefield, assess situations, apply appropriate decisionmaking techniques, and decide and direct action in a time-constrained, fluid environment.

We are changing these traditional methods and focusing more on making logical decisions through rapid processual and intuitive decisionmaking techniques that rely on execution-centric and repetitious training through tactical vignettes at the company and task force levels. This training begins to expand the officer's decisionmaking tool kit and experience. This cannot be accomplished in the classroom. The student must take an active role in realistic and rigorous training simulations where decisions determine tactical success or failure. There must be tactical consequences, stress and rigor like that of Ranger School, not high school.[6] Therefore, it is essential that new training methodologies and models are reevaluated and revitalized to establish within battle schools a leader development program robust enough to train battle command within digitally equipped, constructive, virtual, and live environments. Like the National Training Center, the Armor School is redesigning the Armor Captains Career Course to provide a world class, multifaceted training experience.

Thus the training goal of OES transformation is, and should be, to immerse future leaders and commanders into scenario-based, execution-centric training. Here they can begin to develop battlefield wisdom and build a mental library of tactical experiences. Then, during future deployments, they can recognize typical or atypical situations as a basis for decisionmaking in a time-constrained environment.[7] While Army XXI C4I systems can assist leaders and commanders with C2 and situational awareness, rapid decisionmaking is a uniquely human dynamic that must be learned and become automatic.

Army Digitization

C4I systems are changing organizational structure based on battlefield efficiencies realized through the Army Battle Command System (ABCS) and Army Tactical Command and Control System (ATCCS). With the completion of the 4th Infantry Division's DCX I and II, the Army has secured a substantial base of knowledge and skills in implementing and employing ATCCs, such as the Maneuver Control System (MCS), the All Source Analysis System (ASAS), and the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS). Almost every military professional journal features one or more articles about digitally enhanced job aides, vehicles, organizations, or tactics, techniques, and procedures for training and combat — written by FORSCOM leaders and NCOs. However, the majority of these skills and knowledge remain in units at Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Lewis, Washington; and within the combat development and materiel acquisition community. Exposure to these systems for the rest of the Army is limited to these venues. Meanwhile, the Armor School possesses 17 M1A2 SEP tanks, FBCB2-equipped conduct of fire trainers (COFTs), close combat tactical trainer (CCTT), digital display tabletop trainers (D2T2), and FBCB2 battle command (digital) classrooms that can begin to fulfill training requirements. Until recently, no formal, fully inte-

grated C4I training focused on battle command within the TRADOC OES.

Leadership-Centric Training

The Armor School wants the student experience to be a lot more like a combat training center (CTC) rotation or Ranger School, and a lot less like the current traditional approach for training at all levels across the Army. The traditional approach spends a lot of time and energy on facts and figures that deteriorate and are forgotten rapidly. Instead, the Armor School is moving away from knowledge-based instruction and toward leadership-centric experiences. Students will train as they fight — with other soldiers of ranks above and below. This is the concept underlying the gauntlet training initiated in the 16th Cavalry Regiment and Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) in 2000. It calls on students to quickly grasp critical and enabling skill sets at three levels.

Master means that the students can accomplish the task alone, to the Army standard and time. Mastery requires repetitive training and multiple experiences. Course master tasks for lieutenants and captains are:

- Troop-leading procedures.
- Rapid decisionmaking that results in a standard overlay order.
- Lethality at the point of contact (plan, prep, and execute direct fires in the defense and offense).
- Inspect a unit (platoon for the lieutenants course and company for the captains course).
- Navigate (map and compass, map orienteering, and map w/GPS).
- In addition, the lieutenants course will add the task fight the tank.

Most of our time will be spent in accomplishing these tasks in constructive, virtual, live, and distributed training environments.

Know means that the student can solve the tactical problem or execute the task with some assistance — either the aid of another officer or NCO, a checklist, decision aid, or a manual. Know tasks include instruction such as MDMP, tank gunnery skills test, and call for fire.

Understand means that the students know where to go to get information on how to conduct the task. These tasks will be accomplished by self-study, distance learning, websites, CD-ROM, or manuals. These tasks will be tested in a self-diagnostic test given twice during the courses.

Why the Gauntlet?

Gauntlets are multiechelon, multigrade, battle-focused leadership experiences conducted in a combination of constructive, virtual, and live training venues.[8] Gauntlets involve NCOs from the NCOA, lieutenants from the Armor Officer Basic Course (AOBC), scouts from the Scout Leader's Course (SLC), captains from the Armor Captains Career Course (AC3) and lieutenant colonels and colonels from the Armor Pre-Command Course (APCC), all working together as units to solve complex tactical problems. This training technique is well described in 2LT Humayun S. Khan's "Enter the Gauntlet."[9]

The Armor School is increasing the capabilities of the training environment to mirror those in digitally equipped combat units because the armor and mechanized force will soon reach a more than 50 percent digital saturation by the end of FY04. The first step toward full integration was creating the FBCB2 Battle Command Training System. Building a partnership with the III Corps Digital Training Division G3, National Simulations Center, TRADOC Systems Manager and Program Manager FBCB2, the Armor School is investing in and conducting digitally enhanced gauntlets and C4I training exercises in constructive and limited virtual training environments. Students from all courses are now attending a FBCB2 Leader's Course at Fort Knox using the FBCB2 Battle Command Training System. This classroom training environment uses a limited number of FBCB2 emulators, such as commercial off-the-shelf computers and web-based training. Once students demonstrate their skills on the FBCB2 emulators, they plan, prepare, and fight battles using the FBCB2 as their interface for C2 and situational awareness.

Installing and leveraging emerging ATCCS stimulation and simulation systems, driven by Janus, creates the constructive training environment where the training focus and conditions shift from technical training to critical leader skills training and rapid decisionmaking. Additionally, FBCB2-equipped M1A2 SEP COFTs, M3A3 Bradley Advanced Tactical Training System (BATTS), and the CCTT enable virtual training exercises where student officers and NCOs can continue to reinforce and demonstrate mastery of a clearly defined and focused skill set. By leveraging current and emerging resources, NCOs, lieutenants, captains, lieutenant colonels, and colonels focus on battle command aided by FBCB2.[10]

By the summer of 2002, the Armor School will field to the 16th Cavalry Regiment the required instrumentation system to facilitate live, digitally enhanced gauntlet training. Moving toward full integration, live digital gauntlets will include mounted exercises and battles in MOUT, live-fire ranges, and maneuver areas on Fort Knox. The 16th Cavalry Regiment recognizes this effort as Phase I. It is necessary and prudent to further replicate the Army's C4I architecture in the Armor School to train companies in a battalion and brigade context — Phase II. While our focus is not in developing staff officers and NCOs, we must train as we fight, by creating a rigorous and realistic constructive, virtual, and live training environment.

The New Captain's Course

This coming fall, the Armor School plans on executing the Combined Arms Battle Command Course (CABCC) with officers from the armor, infantry, engineer, and aviation branches. The rudimentary doctrine, tactics, and constructive battle simulations will be taught through distance learning, similar to the advanced training that Armor Reserve Component officers attend through the Armor Captains Career Course. Applying what is learned will be the focus of the resident phase, focusing completely on virtual and live gauntlet training.

CABCC consists of a three-phased, 10-week course that focuses on assignment-oriented training that will prepare captains for company command in a battalion and brigade context. The purpose is to provide captains with training on combined arms operations and branch-specific tactical and technical skills for company/team command and/or company grade branch qualifying assignments. CABCC graduates will be experienced in battle command and ready to be a successful company/team commander. He will be able to visualize, describe, and direct combined arms operations and plan, prepare, execute, assess, and correct training deficiencies at the platoon and company levels. CABCC consists of three separate and focused phases: distance learning; resident; and 'train the trainer' experience at a combat training center.[11]

Phase I of CABCC will be 4 weeks of knowledge-based asynchronous and synchronous distance learning and tactical training, respectively. The student will attend Phase I at his home station assignment. The asynchronous curriculum focus is on leader development at the company/troop level, including; ethical decisionmaking, building cohesive units, unit maintenance operations, Army family team building, critical thinking skills, supply operations, risk management, training development and management, and Army doctrine and policy. The synchronous curriculum focuses on troop-leading procedures, indirect fire planning, maneuver, intelligence preparation of the battlefield, and offensive, defensive, stability and support, and MOUT operations conducted in constructive battle simulations. During this phase, a small-group instructor is assigned to each virtual small group as a coach, teacher, and mentor to enrolled officers.

Phase II of CABCC is a 4-week resident "how to fight" laboratory, consisting of intensive virtual and live battle simulations and scenarios conducted in a digitally enhanced, multiechelon, multigrade, execution-centric method — gauntlets. CABCC will conduct gauntlets with the NCOA, the Basic Officers Leader's Course – Phase II, and the APCC to create training synergy and depth in the battalion and brigade context. Embedded, digital C2 and situational awareness systems enhance virtual and live training experiences. Battle simulations and scenarios will focus on combat arms leader and tactical competencies — master tasks. Master tasks are supported by offensive, defensive, stability and support, and MOUT tasks specific to maneuver, combined arms operations. This phase is performance-oriented, and each student will be evaluated, pass or fail, on executing critical leadership and command positions.

Phase III of CABCC will be 2 weeks of intensive live training and experience conducted at one of the CTCs where the focus is on small-unit training. Students will attend and complete an observer controller (OC) course at the CTC and perform duties as a platoon OC during a CTC rotation. The student, through the coaching, teaching, and mentorship of a senior OC, will learn how to assess, develop, and correct training deficiencies at the platoon level. The student will deliver at least one after-action review during the rotation where he will be evaluated by a senior OC.

Transformation at the Armor School will ensure that Fort Knox continues to graduate officers who will be able to lead, motivate, and command companies, troops, or teams to win on tomorrow's complex and digitized battlefield.

The Challenges

The current unit set fielding (USF) timelines and the Army digitization master plan (ADMP) fell short of recognizing the branch schools as integral and necessary components of developing leaders for assignment to legacy modernized and interim units. However, across TRADOC, leaders are working diligently to correct this oversight. The Armor School's and the 16th Cavalry Regiment's FBCB2 Battle Command Training System, integrated digital leader development, and its Mounted Leaders Digital Training Course (MLDTC) are examples.

The Army must continue to implement creative and adaptive approaches to developing leaders for 21st century military operations within current and emerging leader development course structure. Digital training is still part proof and part concept. However, TRADOCs approval of the Army Digital Training Strategy (ADTS v2.8) provides a holistic approach to leader development and digital training. Only through such a holistic approach, will we develop confident leaders who can turn away from digital information screens and fight the tank.

As the Army learned from DCX I and II, leaders at all levels lack confidence in digital C2 and SA systems. Leaders consistently migrated backward to traditional or analog methods. Ultimately, these conditions may have impacted the decisionmaker's ability to understand the situation and, ultimately, the quality of a published decision. As a result, we are not leveraging the full potential of ATCCS or the ABCS information infrastructure. This may be a direct result of a lack of integrated training on digital systems within the unit and institutional education programs. Until digital training becomes an integral component of our NCO and officer education system, TRADOC cannot grow leaders for current and future organizations and operations.

Currently, the only venue for initial and sustainment training of C4I systems, at the individual or collective level, resides at the unit where commanders and leaders constantly manage mission and operational tempo. This situation has effectively stymied the Army's ability to forge forward with digitally enhanced units. We can mitigate this situation and effectively place the Army back on a more direct path of transformation by aggressively integrating TRADOC schools into the transformation equation through the development of warfighting-focused battle schools. Therefore, it is necessary that TRADOC and FORSCOM share leader development and training responsibility and that digital training is infused in leader development models and methodology. OES Transformation addresses this need.

Leader development centers and battle schools cannot continue to be left behind while the force is undergoing a rapid and aggressive C4I fielding plan and transformation. TRADOC system managers, combat developers, and program managers are addressing the shortfalls in these plans to train the force and alleviate the unmanageable training burden put on the unit. In either case, neither the institution nor the unit can effectively and efficiently develop leaders or train units under the current circumstances.

From the ground up, the Army must be trained to integrate C4I systems into its development of situational awareness and information management as the basis of rapid decisionmaking, execution of the military decisionmaking processes, and C2. At a minimum, FBCB2 and the ATCCS specific to each battlefield operating system must be fielded to TRADOC leader development schools — sooner rather than later. Embedding these digital C2 and training systems into leader development POIs will satisfy long-term Army transformation objectives. Additionally, when leaders and commanders at all levels report to their units of assignment, they will possess a full range of experiences and critical leader skills.

Notes

[1]*U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations,* Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 14 June 2001, p. 1-14-8.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Bernard M. Bass, "Leading in the Army After Next," *Military Review,* March-April 1998, p. 55.

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[4]COL John M. House, "The Enemy After Next," *Military Review*, March-April 1998, p. 22-27.

[5]Fred P. Stein, "Army Digitization Operational Impacts," *www.dodccrp.org/1999CCRTS/pdf_files/track_6/025stein.pdf*

[6]16th Cavalry Regiment Training SOP, dated 21 November 2001.

[7]BG Huba Wass de Czege and MAJ Jacob Biever, "Optimizing Future Battle Command Technologies," *Military Review*, March-April 1998, p. 17.

[8]A detailed description of the Gauntlet Training Exercise is outlined in the 16th Cavalry Regiment Training SOP, dated 21 November 2001, p. 4-5.

[9]2LT Humayun S. Khan, "Enter the Gauntlet," *ARMOR,* March-April 2001, p. 38; available online at *www.knox.army.mil/armormag* under the "Back Issues" link.

[10]For a good description of FBCB2 capabilities, see *Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade and Below (FBCB2) and the Information Dominance of the Battlefield.* This paper was written by CPT Lopez during Phase II of the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course, and can be found under "Professional Development Articles" at *www quartermaster.army.mil/ltd/index.html*.

[11]An outline of the CABCC course can be found on the Fort Knox website by going to the "search" function and typing in "CABCC" and downloading the CABCC PowerPoint presentation.

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